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ABSTRACT

A year-long interpretive case study was conducted to examine a second grade teacher's beliefs and practices concerning classroom management during whole language instruction. The study was designed to determine whether the teacher's beliefs concerning classroom management matched those discussed in the early childhood literature and also whether they matched her practices. If it were determined that her beliefs and her practices were not congruent, the effect of this incongruence on her and her students would also be assessed. From data analysis it was concluded that the teacher held strong beliefs about classroom management and that they were similar to those discussed in the early childhood literature, which emphasizes the indoctrination of self-direction in students. Yet her practices appeared to be similar to those discussed in the classroom management literature, which emphasize the teacher's establishment and maintenance of order through academic work. Because of this discrepancy, her students were not becoming self-directed, and this caused her frustration. The teacher felt that she might have to become less nurturing if she became cognizant of the differences between her classroom management beliefs and practices. With time, however, she used her newly found awareness to come up with concrete ways to make her beliefs and practices work for her and not against her. A list of 33 references is appended. (GLR)

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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM: A CASE OF MRS. W.'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Introduction

Educational researchers have only started to examine classroom management issues within the last 10 - 20 years. This phenomenon has taken place for several reasons. First, educational researchers today are focusing more on the personal meanings derived from their work in order to gain a better understanding of the classroom environment than on relating isolated teacher behaviors to student achievement. Because of this, researchers are beginning to understand the "total sum of what teachers do in classroom settings" (Doyle, 1986, p. 392). Secondly, there have been a number of research programs dedicated solely to the study of classroom management and because of this, more attention has been given to the subject at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association and more major reviews have begun to surface surrounding this topic (see Brophy, 1983; Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Goss & Ingersoll, 1981; and Doyle, 1986). This recent focus on classroom management research has given everyone a clearer picture of just what classroom management issues are all about.

From examining all the work presently being conducted

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concerning classroom management, it is evident that early childhood educators see classroom management in an entirely different light than classroom management researchers do. Because of this vast difference, it is essential we explore the literature concerning the classroom management function in teaching as seen through the eyes of classroom management researchers and early childhood educators.

Classroom Management Researchers' Perspectives About Classroom Management

Walter Doyle's (1986) conceptualization is perhaps the best known summary of this kind of research. For Doyle, classroom management is fundamentally a process of solving order in the classroom rather than the problems of misbehavior or student engagement. It is related to the entire classroom setting and should be placed at the center of the task of teaching. Teaching is comprised of two main task constructs which revolve around the dilemmas of learning and order. Learning is covered with the instructional function and order is served by the managerial function. The tasks of promoting learning and order are closely intertwined since a certain level of orderliness is necessary for instruction to take place. Order means that students are following the necessary program of action for a particular classroom event to be realized. It is "embedded in the activities teachers and students enact together as they accomplish work (p. 424)." Programs of action include "both the rules for social participation and the

demands of academic work" (p. 425). They have direction, momentum, and energy (see Arlin, 1979, 1982: Erickson, 1982; Kounin, 1970). Order in the classroom depends upon the strength and durability of the program of action - academic work - and is held in place by the repetition of contextualization cues that participants constantly use to tell each other what is happening (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Erickson & Shultz, 1981; McDermott, 1976; Griffin & Meehan, 1979). Cues include verbal and nonverbal communication as well as the rhythm and direction of the momentum of events.

Early Childhood Education Educators' Perspectives on Classroom Management

Many Early Childhood educators have also begun to talk about classroom management. They do agree with classroom management researchers that order is important. However, they see the concept of order from an entirely different lense. They believe that order is assured in the classroom when early childhood teachers promote self-control in the children. E.C.E. teachers have been taught that young children need to learn self-control so they can eventually govern themselves. Early childhood organizations, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, advocate the employment of sound child guidance approaches to accomplish this goal. These child guidance approaches emphasize the indoctrination of self-control through positive helping interactions (Gartell, 1987a, 1987b; Clewett, 1988; N.A.E.Y.C., 1988; Honig, 1985; Moore, 1982; Miller, 1984; Stone, 1978;

Schaffer, 1984). Early childhood educators feel when self-control is stressed with children, they learn to understand and use their "constructive behaviors" (Gartrell, 1987). Early Childhood organizations say that children learn through the interactions of their own thinking and their own experiences with the external world (N.A.E.Y.C., 1986a, 1986b, & 1988). It is only through these interactions that order can be maintained in the classroom.

The purpose of this paper is to examine an early childhood teacher's beliefs and practices concerning classroom management to determine: 1) Do the beliefs of an E.C.E. educator concerning classroom management match those of E.C.E. literature?; 2) Do her practices match those beliefs?; 3) If they are not congruent, what effect does it have on her and her students?

Methods

The study that began in the fall of 1989 followed the basic premises of descriptive research (Erikson, 1986) and of participant observation (Spradley, 1980). A descriptive research methodology was employed in order to understand the culture participants share for defining the meaning (Erikson, 1986) of classroom management in a second grade classroom where a newly evolved "Whole Language" (Goodman, 1986; Goodman et. al., 1986) program was being implemented.

In the fall semester of '89, this class was observed during its Language Arts Time on four occasions. Two formal interviews were also conducted with the teacher. In the spring semester of

'90, this same Language Arts Time was observed on nine consecutive days from 8:30 - 10:30. In addition to these observations, a focused interview (Spradley, 1979) was conducted with the teacher and two semi-formal interviews were conducted with seven of her second graders. Field notes were kept during Morning Business Time, Language Arts Activity Time, Silent Reading Time, and Spelling Test Time - all parts of what the teacher called her "Whole Language" Language Arts Time. A tape recorder was strategically placed near the teacher during this time to accurately record what the teacher and those children surrounding her were saying. Field notes were kept to complete a picture of life in this classroom during their Language Arts Time. These field notes were coded and analyzed. When the first draft of this paper was ready, it was shared with the teacher in order to ensure that she felt all the observations, tape recordings, and interviews had been accurately transcribed; and to let her share her opinions about the findings. This kind of triangulated approach (Erickson, 1986) was used in an attempt to achieve validity in this project.

Background Information

The School

C. School is a designated magnet school in a Southwestern school district. It offers special programs - before and after school activities, lower class sizes, and a P.E. and Art Specialist - to attract anglos to this inter-city school so the ethnic balance can be improved. The anglos are voluntarily bussed from extended

neighborhoods.

C. School prides itself in being a "Whole Language" school. Throughout the halls, lots of art work and samples of children's writings can be seen. Other things are placed on the walls for children to read like: posters about books, school-wide rules, upcoming events, and the list goes on. There are always books and materials placed on a table by the office for both adults and children to read. A daily lunch menu is placed on a portable bulletin board in the cafeteria for the students to read before they can buy their lunch. Every morning the whole school meets for "pledge time." During this time, they say the Pledge Of Allegiance, have school- wide announcements, and sing songs together. A song chart is placed on the stage so all the children can read along as they sing. The principal and teachers do all sorts of activities at this time to encourage reading - like having giant size charts of the announcements that they read together. One of C. School's biggest goals is to have print everywhere around the school helping children become more literate.

The Classroom

When entering the door of Mrs. W.'s classroom, you become engulfed in her "Whole Language" program. Every bulletin board has some kind of writing on it as seen in the following examples: one board has a child honored on it each week; another board has some examples of things the students have written, and yet another board has the children's explanations of their brightly colored art work.

Other examples of the children's work and art work is taped to any available cupboard or wall. Classroom rules are posted; nearly everything around the room is labeled; and various messages and assignments are written on the chalkboard each day. There are some baskets on the closest bookcase to the door and they have been labeled so the children know where to put their homework, notes from home, etc. A tagboard has been made into a chart for the purpose of managing discipline. On that chart, each child's name has been written above a pocket. At the start of everyday, every child has a green light showing out of his/her pocket. If s/he gets a warning about their behavior the green light is changed to a yellow light. The next infraction causes the yellow light to be changed to a red light and a parent is called. A small tag board with the word "nurse" is hanging right by the door in case anyone needs to go to the nurse. Literally, everything in the room has some kind of print on it.

There are 5 tables scattered around the room. Four of the tabletops are empty and the fifth has 3 computers and 1 printer on it. The teacher's desk is set back away from the center of the room but it only seems to be used for storing supplies or for stashing papers. By the teacher's desk, is a tall bookcase used for teacher's manuals and books. In the middle of the room, there is a big rug with a double-sized chalkboard on the wall nearby. This place is utilized for instruction times like Language Arts Time where Mrs. W. meets with her groups and for Morning Business Time as seen below:

> A girl sits back down on the rug. The teacher directs the children's attention to the board where there are several sentences... She asks them to look for "things" that are wrong with the sentences. A child says the word street needs a capital letter. Mrs. W. asks the class if this is right.

By this large area rug, are bookcases full of books for the children to read. Books have been placed all over the room - on the shelves, in baskets, and on display.

The windows and the children's art work make this a bright classroom filled with sunshine and warmth. Never a day goes by in which you cannot find one or more adults, besides the teacher and instructional aide, in the room. Visitors are always coming in and out so the children are used to seeing various adults in their classroom. For these children, another face just means extra one-on-one attention and they seem to thrive on it.

The Teacher

Mrs. W. earned her B. A. degree in education at the University of Arizona with a specialty in Early Childhood Education and went on to San Diego to become an instructional aide for two years. Wanting a "real teaching job" (from interview), she came back to Tucson and found a position in the Nogales Public School District where she worked for the next two years. Later, she decided to try her luck in Tucson itself and after two long-term substituting jobs, she landed a job with the Tucson Unified School District. There she started out as a half-time kindergarten teacher, went on to become a fifth grade teacher for one year, and

has been working at C. School for the last seven years. Here she taught in a second/third grade team-teaching situation for the first 5 years; and is currently teaching in a self-contained second grade classroom.

The Instructional Aide

Mrs. E. has been an instructional aide at C. School for 9 years. She started out as a parent helper and was hired at the time the school was looking for parents from the neighborhood to become part of the permanent staff. Mrs. W. says, "Mrs. E. loves working with the children and becomes close to them in ways a teacher never could because the teacher is always worrying about things like instruction and Mrs. E. only has to worry about the kids themselves. If you walked in the classroom at any given time, you could see her giving hugs to the children while encouraging them to stay on task."

The Students

There are 24 students in Mrs. W.'s class: 11 girls and 13 boys including 1 Asian American; 1 Native American; 2 African Americans; 9 Anglos; and 11 Mexican Americans. The majority of Mrs. W.'s extended neighborhood students come from low S.E.S. backgrounds while the majority of her neighborhood students come from even lower S.E.S. backgrounds. Mrs. W. says the following of this year's class as compared to other classes she has had, "This group has no heart. They aren't concerned with helping each other.

With that, I mean they don't have time to listen to someone else's opinion and constantly find a way to not accept another student's information on topics."

A Typical Language Arts Period

For the last year and a half, Mrs. W. has been trying out a new Language Arts Program in her classroom. She tells about some of her goals for this program in the following excerpt from her 11/07/89 interview.

> Mrs. W.- Oh, a typical day - the kids usually have a reading contract. They have chosen a book for themselves and (there are) different groups according to similar interests and abilities. I tried it the other way...we started out in the beginning of the school year with working with kids with Big Books and we did a variety of different activities using Big Books to get them familiar, to make them feel comfortable with materials and the written materials, not feel threatened by the .. the writing and their participation...in doing a Big Book cause I noticed that they all tend to feel comfortable and like to respond to things when we do them as a group. I do make sure that everyone responds. I make sure that everyone has like a voice or are able to give an answer so I will go around and ask them what they think or how they feel about something that has happened and you know - to include them. That's one of my main purposes: to include everyone with the Big Books. We then went to books.. I gathered several books of various titles in which they had (a) say, like there was more than one of book of each title so they could kind of group themselves together according to their interests. That worked out okay but I wasn't very happy with it so then I (laugh) decided that there were many skills that some kids already knew and I decided then to group them according to skills that they needed to work on and that's where I am now.

Findings

Three major themes evolved from this research project. One theme dealt with the teacher's push for self-direction in her students; the second theme dealt with the fact that everything the teacher was trying to accomplish, even promoting self-direction, evolved from her primary goal of instruction; and the third contrasting theme dealt with classroom management issues that interfered with her students becoming totally self-directed in a classroom setting.

To illustrate the first major theme about Mrs. W.'s stress for self-direction, we need to understand her definition of self-direction as seen in this excerpt from an April 25th interview:

> Mrs. W. - I teach self-direction by instructing them to attempt things on their own, to use other resources that are in the room. I try to make sure that they know where things are in the room so when they need something, they can go get it right away without asking someone to get it for them. In reading, I try to help them use strategies ... to figure out words, like being able to read the whole sentence using the context of what they are reading.

She goes on to explain more about self-direction somewhere else in this same interview.

> Mrs. W. - ... self-direction, getting them to realize that they are someone special, that we work together as a team in order to get things done, to learn things. I like the idea of cooperative learning because ... everyone comes in with a different background of knowledge that they can share with others and what someone doesn't know, they might be able to learn from ... someone else in the class ... and I expect them to accept each other as people, you know, respect each other because we have done some role playing. If they don't respect each other, then no learning takes place. But

> they are in an environment where they do a lot of group and cooperative kinds of learning. We have to be accountable for the knowledge that we take in. But sometimes as a teacher, you can't go around to everyone and help them individually. They have to absorb together as a group. They help each other.

Now, we need to examine what Mrs. W. does in her classroom to promote this value as taken from both the observations and interviews. These include: weekly reading contracts kept in each child's own reading folder with other papers they accumulate as the week goes by; a place to keep each reading group's folders, labeled baskets where the students pick up book report forms and where they put away finished book report forms, pencils placed at each table, supplies strategically placed around the room, and the list goes on. Mrs. W. even tells the children about her expectations for self-direction as can be seen in the next situation where the children are getting ready for their spelling test and she says, "... I am looking at those people who are being very self-directed"; and then later says, "Table Four, everyone has numbered their test booklets. They are self-directed."

In the focused interview, minor themes developed around this same theme about self-direction. One can be seen through the following excerpt where Mrs. W. substitutes the term self-esteem for the term self-direction on two separate occasions:

> <u>Example #1</u>
> Researcher - If I were to ask you to think of things that you did at the beginning of the year to particularly stress self-direction, could you come up with any other things?
>
> Mrs. W. - I think at the beginning of the year I worked

> a lot with self-esteem and feeling good about themselves and making them want to do things on their own, using each other's help. As a group, we worked together on rules that would help each other ... get along best. We talked about these things and we tried to help each other enforce them by using manners ... and we talked about saying it in a negative way versus saying it in a positive way in language that they understood.
>
> Example #2
> Researcher - Could you please list all the ways in which your children promote self-direction in each other?
>
> Mrs. W. - The problem with children helping each other in promoting self-esteem is that I found that I had 9 children who were 'only children' and they have not had to help others. They have always received help when they needed it so it was always a - What can you do for me? - sort of thing and they had real problems talking to each other nicely and even though we as a class modeled this and worked with it each day - we talked about the things we thought were good, and successful - and the reactions that happened when they said negative things to people but it was still very difficult ... (taken from the 4/25/90 interview).

Here is where the issue of self-direction becomes murky. Why does Mrs. W. use the term self-esteem in place of the term self-direction in her interviews? To try and understand this, Mrs. W. was interviewed about the way in which she switches terms as taken from the same interview:

> Researcher - When I asked you how children promoted self-direction in each other, you said self-esteem. Did you mean self-esteem?
>
> Mrs. W. - Right. I meant self-direction, self-esteem would lead to self-direction. If they felt good about themselves and what they are doing, then they would be able to be self-directed. They would be more willing to share with others if they felt good about themselves. They would be more willing to help one another, to take turns, because then they feel what they said was important as well as what someone else says is important. For example, there is this one student that on several occasions has said - "That is good thinking. That was the answer I was planning on saying" - and then

> on another day, its - "You took my pencil." (We laugh.) And I guess that's when the insecurity of that person comes in.
>
> Researcher - Where did you get the concept of teaching children self-direction or self-esteem?
>
> Mrs. W. - Can it be (from) personal feelings?
>
> Researcher - Yes.
>
> Mrs. W. - As a child and as an adult and a teenager, what worked best with me (was) those times that I felt good about myself, I felt like I could do anything and I was willing to attempt things when I felt good about myself and then from that I experimented with kids in the classroom ... to see how much they accomplish, how much they wanted to come to you doing more and putting details in their lives and in their speech and in their drawing and in their writing if they felt good about themselves or their projects or whatever they were doing and you can see the difference. It's as if one child is told - "You don't write very well" (and then) they don't want to write. You want to stop where you are and not do any more because you feel it is not going to be right anyway. It's not going to be good. Why should I continue working? And besides, all the early childhood literature says the same thing I'm telling you right now.

Another minor theme which revolves around this teacher's desire to promote self-direction involves the children's perception of what Mrs. W. means by self-direction. This can be seen in their answers to the following question as taken from an interview on 5/29/90. The question looked like this - "When Mrs. W. tells you that she likes the way you or your group is being self-directed, what does she mean by that?" Their replies included: acting good, being quiet, being good with the rest of your group, not playing around, listening, not talking to other people, sitting, not making much noise, not bothering others, not arguing, helping people out, not playing around, listening to what the teacher is saying, paying

attention, and doing what you are supposed to be doing. They also seem to be aware of just what Mrs. W. does to promote self-direction in her classroom. They said she: "encourages us"; "teaches us to listen and stuff"; "if we are bad, she puts us in time-out"; "sets goals for us"; "gives us rewards"; and switches our green light to yellow light and then to red light when we are not listening." The last quote referred to the previously explained assertive discipline plan.

The children also seem to see a relationship between self-direction and self-esteem in the same way Mrs. W. does. This can be seen in the following excerpts as taken from the same 5/29 interview:

> Researcher - Mrs. W. wants you to feel good about yourself. What does she mean by that?
>
> Child #4 - She means she wants you to be happy and she wants you to like yourself and say you like yourself.
>
> Child #5 - Like, think you are good and feel you really listen and know you are self-directed.
>
> Child #6 - Be proud about yourself. Think well about yourself.
>
> Child #7 - Um, like she means we should like ourselves and, um, like the things we do.
>
> Researcher - What does that have to do with being self-directed?
>
> Child #4 - You could say you are being sort of self-directed by being good.
>
> Child #5 - You feel good about yourself when you are self-directed.
>
> Child #6 - (long pause) Well, if you are proud of yourself then you can be self-directed.

> Child #7 - Um, like if you are self-directed, then you feel good about yourself.

The second theme illustrates that Mrs. W. teaches and reinforces self-direction through her daily lessons concerning subject matter. Observations proved this to be true as can be seen in the following example where Mrs. W. is thanking the students for their self-direction during Morning Business Time. Here the students are correcting misspelled words on the blackboard. D., A., and E. are three of the students the teacher keeps addressing during this lesson.

> Mrs. W. - D., that word is on your spelling list. No. He gets one too. D., you get one too. There were two corrections in that word. A., thank you for raising your hand nice and quietly. O.K., that's start. S-T-A-R-T. A. The second word is thought. D., excuse me, you may sit back here please. D., thank you. You need to sit over here. Thank you to those who are showing good self-direction this morning. O.K., the second word is thought. I thought the start of the race was in the city. Thought. I thought of the plan. D., if you need more room you can erase or just move it over. Thank you to those people who are giving the people at the board time to think. Good D. Thank you. O.K. I see another correction up there. E. There's one more up there. I should see more hands and more people looking at the board. Let's see more hands. There's one more word up there that needs a correction. O.K., there has to be more hands. O.K., A. O.K. Race. R-A-C-E, good. O.K., calendar. Everyone should turn around please. Your attention should be up here. We already have some names on the board who are staying in at break. I hope we don't have to start the morning adding more. O.K. (Taken from the April 27th observation).

Everything Mrs. W. tries to accomplish and does accomplish in the classroom revolves around instruction. Even when she is asked directly about the promotion of self-direction, the subject of

instruction filters through again and again as is evident in excerpts from some of her previous quotes which appeared earlier in this paper:

> Example #1
> Mrs. W. - ... self-direction, getting them to realize that they are someone special, that we work together as a team in order to get things done, to learn things....if they don't respect each other, then no learning takes place. But they are in an environment where they do a lot of group and cooperative kinds of learning. We have to be accountable for the knowledge we take in...
>
> Example #2
> Mrs. W. - ... and then I experimented with the kids in the classroom ... to see how much they accomplish, how much they wanted to come to you doing more and putting details in their lives and in their speech and in their drawing and in their writing...

When Mrs. W. was asked to list her goals for her Language Arts time in the April 25th interview, she did not even mention the promotion of self-direction or self-concept once as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> Researcher - Could you please list your goals for Language Arts Time?
>
> Mrs. W. - For students to learn from one another, to share experiences with one another, the subject matter that they may be learning about, for them to be able to express themselves in different ways - talking, writing, reading. Looking up different information to find the answers to whatever it may be, to know where to go. Learn to use different resources that they didn't know were available to find out answers...

All of the data made it obvious that one of Mrs. W.'s goals is to promote self-direction in her 2nd grade students but this occurs primarily through the language arts activities she provides for her students to engage in. Instruction seems to be Mrs. W.'s primary goal.

This is where the contrasting major theme enters the picture. Mrs. W. feels it is important to stress self-direction and self-esteem as is evident in all her answers; and the children seem to understand just what Mrs. W. wants which is evident in all their answers. Yet the observations show that on many occasions, classroom management obstacles arise preventing the children from becoming self-directed. Mrs. W. seems to even go against her own objective of promoting self-direction as can be seen in the following examples: children would lose their reading contracts and Mrs. W. would immediately give them new ones; children were constantly asking her where to put either their homework or their finished book report forms and she would tell them; children would lose their reading folders or papers from their folders and she would help them find them; and the list goes on. It must be noted that these examples did occur during times when the teacher was busy instructing small and large groups of students and it seemed like it was easier to just quickly give the children what they wanted than it was to stop the momentum of the lesson by doing whatever was necessary to promote the concept of self-direction. This can be seen in the following situation from the March 27th observation where Mrs. W. is working with a group of students during Language Arts Time. A boy, who has been previously told what to do when he is through, comes up and asks where to put the pictures his group has been working on.

> Mrs. W. - Um, leave it on your table. If you need to start another one, fine. And if you don't, (pause) check on the people working on the computer.

Then she immediately turns back to the child who is still reading for her without losing a beat.

Other blockades for Mrs. W.'s goals can be seen through the list Mrs. W. made of things that interfere with her children being self-directed. These include such classroom management issues as group dynamics as can be seen below:

> Mrs. W. - If we talk about the small things and small things can trigger disappointments and things like that - someone being too close to them or "I can't think" when someone is sitting at the table; they have said - "You took my pencil so I can't finish what I am doing. Now I have forgotten what I am suppose to do." Them looking at someone else's paper and making judgements on someone else's work so then they don't get involved in their own. Friends outside the classroom that come to mind, they begin talking about that friend so their mind is off their work. I have heard a lot of, even though we have spent so much time on "Do you think my picture looks good?" and they will go and ask other people. Well, the answer comes out - "No, that's ugly - (We laugh) And we have talked about, I ask them - "What do you think about your picture? Have you included what you wanted to include in your picture?" And they would say - "Yeah." But someone else would come and say - "She hasn't put in the ... He needs to ...

When I asked Mrs. W. if it was possible for all the children to become self-directed, she pressed the issue by insisting it was her goal to have them be. So I asked her if it was possible to have a totally self directed classroom. She answered with the following quote, from the April 25th interview, after a long pause:

> Mrs. W. - I believe it is. I think they need a little more time. I think they need more time learning how to .. and I am talking about the teacher right now. I am talking about being self-directed by not asking the teacher, by knowing where to go, and doing stupid things like that. You know for some people it just has to be a structured situation where they must go right at 10:00 must turn left at 11 (we laugh).

Next I inquired with the following:

> Researcher - And when do you think this self-direction is going to occur?
>
> Mrs. W. - Um, I don't see it happening this year. If they had more time with having repetition of things then yes I feel that they would be able to be self-directed.

At the end of this interview, I asked this same question one more time. The issue of group dynamics came up again as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> Researcher - Do you think a classroom could ever be completely self-directed?
>
> Mrs. W. - A classroom? If I look at the past, I don't see that a classroom could be totally self-directed. There is too much involved. Kids at this level are just making decisions and it is too hard for them to make a decision that they all can agree upon so they would need to have some guidelines to go by, they have to understand certain rules in which to get along with others and to come up with an answer to a problem.

Mrs. W. seems to be aware of her own frustration with knowing what she wants to accomplish - the promotion of self-direction in her students - and yet not being able to achieve this goal within a classroom setting. In her interviews, she even comes up with ways to rectify this situation - having repetition, having guidelines to go by, and having them understand rules in which to get along with others - because she really wants her goal to eventually materialize.

Conclusion and Implications

From the contrasting themes: the teacher's desire to strive

for the promotion of self-direction in her students; and all the reasons derived from classroom observation as to why her objective cannot occur in this classroom setting, the following was concluded. The 2nd grade teacher from this research project holds strong beliefs about classroom management. Her beliefs are similar to that of early childhood educators' perspectives about order - the implementation of child guidance approaches that emphasize the indoctrination of self-direction (Stone, 1978; Moore, 1982; Miller, 1984; Schaffer, 1984; Honig, 1985; Gartell, 1987a, 1987b; Clewett, 1988; N.A.E.Y.C., 1988). Her beliefs stem from her experiences as a young child, her experiences as a teacher of young children, and her frequent bombardment with early childhood literature in which classroom management concerns the building of autonomy in the individual child. This literature says little about the complexity of a classroom full of 25 - 30 young children or about the importance of momentum in maintaining order.

The analysis of the data showed that even though this 2nd grade teacher's beliefs are similar to those of early childhood educators', her classroom practices appear to take on the characteristics of the classroom researchers' perspectives about classroom management. Order in her classroom was achieved through academic work. Classroom management research suggests that work guides students' attention and information processing as well as directs their concentration towards participation and cooperation (Doyle, 1986).

This teacher kept the context, in which order was achieved,

intact through the language arts activities she provided. These activities seemed to provide both a force and a direction that pushed the lessons along. These concepts are also described in Doyle's (1986) and Gump's (1982) work. Doyle says: "order is defined by the strength and durability of the program of action embedded in the activities teachers and students enact together as they accomplish work. Since programs of actions have direction and energy, they pull events towards their completion (p. 424)." Gump also recognized that students were being pulled along through work.

Instruction was this teacher's primary concern. Her knowledge-in-action (Schon, 1987) demonstrated that slowing down the pace of her lesson, by reinforcing the concept of self-direction in the individual child, would disrupt or veer from her main concern - the lesson. Classroom management explains her actions in the following ways. Doyle (1986) says that academic work can be organized to maintain momentum and to guard against competing programs of action thus promoting order in the classroom. An emphasis on activity flow and pace is also reflected in Kounin's (1970) work. He found that smoothness and momentum in managing classroom groups were associated with success. Arlin (1982) showed teachers shape classroom events by avoiding delays.

This teacher seemed to have a second sense about giving the students whatever they wanted or needed quickly when they became potential problems in her classroom. Kounin (1979) describes this same phenomenon when he tells how the teacher must decide when and where to intervene into the flow of activity to repair order, that

is, to stop a competing or disruptive vector and return to the primary program of action as soon as possible. The degree of order depends upon the strength of the primary program of action and how long it takes for the intervention to occur before the program of action has gained momentum (Doyle, 1986). This teacher took care to pay attention to both of these concerns.

The teacher in this early childhood classroom holds some strong beliefs about how order is achieved in her classroom that do not coincide with her practices. Her practices actually seem to negate any real possibility of her students ever becoming self-directed within the school year. What effect has the differences between this teacher's beliefs and practices had on her and her students? It is apparent that the teacher is frustrated with not being able to meet her goal of promoting self-direction in all her students before the school year is over and with not being able to comprehend why her goal is not materializing. The students also seem to be picking up on these mixed messages concerning what the teacher wants and what the teacher does as is evident in their answers about what self-direction means.

During this year long study, the teacher became more and more aware of her beliefs about classroom management. But it was not until the end of the study that she became cognizant of her classroom management practices. At first, it was hard for her to understand that her practices for accomplishing order in her classroom were actually part of the reason why her students weren't becoming self-directed. She kept saying her beliefs and practices

were not conflicting at all. Later she shared that she was afraid that by becoming aware of the differences between her classroom management beliefs and her actual classroom management practices, she might have to somehow let go of that nurturing part of her that goes with the territory of being an early childhood teacher. With time though, she came up with some concrete ways to make her beliefs and her practices work for her and not against her as can be seen in the final infcrmal interview.

> Mrs. W. - I want to become more aware of what I am actually doing and how it is affecting my goals and my students. I want to reassess and modify my goals - maybe not expect so much from seven- and eight-year-olds in a classroom setting. I want to be more consistent and follow through more but I still want to tell the students what a good job they are doing. Maybe I could give more nods to certain students while I am working with others so as not to disrupt the flow of the lesson. It seems to me that we could have more short term goals and things like that.

This study points out the importance of making early childhood teachers aware of their classroom management practices so their goals for the promotion of self-direction in their students can become more of a reality. To make teachers aware of the differences between their beliefs and their practices, we must reach the foundations of teachers' beliefs concerning how order is achieved in the classroom. Two areas in which this is possible are through teacher education and early childhood literature. The teacher in this study mentioned that she had on many occasions taken what appeared to be simple methods, her professors had taught her, out into the classroom only to find that they needed to be adapted to the students abilities and backgrounds. If E.C.E.

educators could look at order in the classroom in this same way, they could begin to assist teachers in adapting child guidance approaches to the complexities of the classroom setting. More concrete solutions, similar to the ones the teacher was coming up with at the end of this study, could be discussed in teacher education programs.

Early childhood literature is another source that contributes to teachers' beliefs. Teachers like the one in this study look to the literature in their field for information, advice, or just plain affirmation. At the present, early childhood literature says nothing about classroom management research. It is time editors of the early childhood journals include some studies like this one to make early childhood teachers more aware of their beliefs and practices about a variety of topics, such as the one examined in this study. It is only through this kind of awareness that early childhood teachers can ever find solutions to complicated problems like promoting self-direction in young children within the complex classroom environment.

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ABSTRACT

An interpretive case study was conducted to examine an early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices concerning classroom management during her "Whole Language" Language Arts time to determine if: 1) Her beliefs concerning classroom management matched those discussed in the early childhood literature; 2) Her beliefs matched her practices; 3) Her beliefs and her practices were not congruent, what effect it had on her and her students.

From the analysis of the data, it was concluded that the second grade teacher in this study held some strong beliefs about classroom management which were similar to those discussed in the early childhood literature - by emphasizing the indoctrination of self-control through positive helping interaction, the matter of sustaining order is simultaneously handled. Yet, her practices appeared to be similar to those discussed in the classroom management literature - by establishing and maintaining order, instruction and learning can occur. Because of the discrepancy between this teacher's beliefs and practices, her students were not becoming self-directed and she was frustrated with not being able to help them meet this goal. The teacher in this study felt she might have to let go of the nurturing side of an early childhood teacher if she had to become cognizant of the differences between her classroom management beliefs and practices. With time though, she used her newly found awareness to come up with some concrete ways to make her beliefs and her practices work for her and not against her.